

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed on October 24, 2008. Claims 1, 3-7, 10-17, 19-21, 23-25, and 27-38 are pending. By this amendment, Claims 1, 3, 7, 13-15, 21, 25, 28, 30, and 33-38 are amended, Claim 19 is canceled, and new Claim 39 is presented. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

It is noted that all differences between the cited reference(s) and each claim may not necessarily be recited herein. This is not an admission on the part of the Applicant that Applicant concurs with the Examiner's assertions regarding the patentability of said claims over the cited reference(s). Applicant, in some cases, may simply choose to highlight particular differences between the claims and the reference(s). Such differences may render any differences not explicitly addressed moot.

1. Summary of Amendments

Amendments to Claims 1, 13, 21, 25, and 30 substitute the term *query replacement option* with the term *query refinement option*. Language regarding intended use has been removed, as has one of two replacement option types ("synonyms" has been removed, "broadening suggestions" has been retained). The limitation that at least one replacement option contains characters/words that are different from characters/words entered by a user has been added. These changes are fully supported in the originally filed

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application. See, for example, page 9, 4th and 5th paragraphs (numbered “2” and “3”) respectively), and page 10 first three paragraphs.

Amendments to **Claims 13** substitutes the term *predefined time delay* to *predetermined time delay*. This is fully supported in the originally filed application. See, for example, page 2, 3rd full paragraph.

Amendments to **Claims 3, 7, 14, 15, 28, and 33–38** are updated to prevent antecedent basis issues as a result of other modifications.

New Claim 39 is presented. This is fully supported in the original specification. See, for example, page 3, 3rd full paragraph, and page 9, last paragraph.

The term “wherein” is also removed from various claim limitations.

2. Rejection of Independent Claim 1 under 35 USC § 103(a)

On pages 2–5 of the Office Action, Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over US 6,564,213 to Ortega et al (hereinafter “**Ortega**”) in view of U.S. Patent Application 2004/0143564 to Gross et al (hereinafter “**Gross**”) in further view of U.S. Patent Application 2003/0225756 to Liu (hereinafter “**Liu**”) in further view of U.S. Patent Application 2001/0053968 to Galitsky (hereinafter “**Galitsky**”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Ortega discloses a system for facilitating online searches that suggests query autocompletion strings to users during the query entry process. Ortega, Abstract.

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Gross discloses incremental searches occurring substantially immediately after each character in a search string is entered by a user. Gross, paragraph 0010.

Lui discloses retrieving additional terms related to the term of interest and combining the selected term and the related terms for formulating a search query. Lui, Abstract.

Galitsky discloses converting a natural-language question to a set of semantic headers, semantic headers representing relationships between multiple concepts of the question, and to use the semantic headers to return answers to the user. Galitsky, Abstract and paragraph 0036.

Independent Claim 1 recites, (1) “defining one or more query related character patterns that do not include an explicit indicator of query submission”, (2) “monitoring entry of query defining characters by a user to detect entry of a defined query related character pattern”, (3) “providing the user with one or more suggested query **replacement** options each time a defined query related character pattern is detected without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission, the one or more suggested query replacement options including a broadening suggestion, the one or more suggested query **replacement** options beginning with a character pattern other than **the query related character pattern**”, and (4) “providing the user with an updated query result each time a defined query related character pattern is detected without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission”.
Emphasis added.

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In rejecting the claim, the Office Action asserts that “Ortega teaches ... providing the user with one or more suggested query refinement options each time a defined query related character pattern is detected without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of the query submission” and “replacing the detected defined query related character (Figure 2A, Reference No. 62, auto completion strings (refinement options), Figure 2A–2B and column 5, lines 23–36, Figure 2A displays the auto completion strings (refinement options) for ‘SO’, the terms and phrases (refinement options) are displayed and the user selects one and the refinement option replaces the ‘SO’ (defined query related character pattern) it is added to the search field and at Figure 2B the display shows the incrementally updated auto completion strings (refinement options) for ‘SONY’.

Also disclosed in Ortega,

For example, if Pokemon products are currently the best selling items within the database 22, the term POKEMON may be suggested whenever a user enters the letters “PO”, even though many hundreds of other items in the database may have names that start with “PO”.

...

FIGS. 2(a) and 2(b) illustrate the general form of a user interface that may be used by the **autocompletion** client 50 for both PCs and handheld computing devices. In this example, as the user enters a search query into a search field 60 of the Amazon.com web site (by voice, stylus, etc.), the **autocompletion** client displays suggested **autocompletion** terms and phrases in a drop-down box 62.

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Ortega, column 4, lines 19–23 and column 5, lines 23–29. Emphasis added. On page 27 of the Office Action, in the “Response to Arguments” section, the Office Action further recites from Ortega:

the related terms list for the keyword COSMOS might start with the terms SAGAN and SPACE, ... once the user has entered a term that appears as a keyword within the table, the **autocompletion** client 50 could simply suggest **adding** the most highly ranked terms in the corresponding related terms list.

See Ortega Column 6 lines 52–67. Emphasis added.

Ortega discloses only **auto-completion** of a partially-entered term, or the **addition** of additional search terms. As is clear, autocompletion refers to the **completion** of partially written words or phrases. Ortega is replete with references to and examples of auto-completion, and even uses this term in the patent title. Figures 2A and 2B in Ortega exclusively show autocompletion suggestions which being with the QUERY. Ortega Figures 5 and 6 disclose a tree structure wherein the final results support only autocompletion, i.e. the results are continuations of the partially-completed word or phrase of the parent node. At best, Ortega only refers to **autocompletion of query, not query replacement options beginning with a character pattern other than the query related character pattern** as recited in independent claim 1.

Therefore, Ortega fails to disclose a method of query refinement by replacement, wherein the replacement suggestions do not begin with the query related character pattern as recited in Independent Claim 1.

None of the other cited references teach or suggest this particular element of claim 1. Because the deficiency of Ortega is not cured by any of the

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cited references (standing alone or in combination), the references fail to teach or suggest each of the elements of amended Independent Claim 1. Accordingly, Claim 1 is allowable over the cited references and the rejection of Claim 1 should be withdrawn.

Claims 3-7, 10-11, 33, and 38-39 depend from Claim 1, and are allowable at least by virtue of this dependency. Accordingly, the rejection of these claims should also be withdrawn.

3. Rejection of Independent Claim 13 under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in further view of Liu in further view of Galitsky. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 13 recites, (1) “providing a user with one or more query **replacement** options as the user enters query defining characters, wherein the one or more query replacement options includes a broadening suggestion, wherein the one or more query **replacement** options **does not begin with the query defining characters**”, (2) “detecting entry of a query defining word by the user without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission”, and (3) “providing the user with an updated query result each time entry of a query defining word is detected without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission, wherein the query defining word includes a string of characters followed by a predetermined **time delay** before additional characters are entered by the user”.

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In rejecting the claim, the Office Action asserts that “Ortega teaches providing a user with one or more suggested query refinement options as the user enters query defining characters and ‘replacing the query defining character’ (Figure 2A, Reference No. 62, auto completion strings (refinement options), Figure 2A–2B and column 5, lines 23–36, Figure 2A displays the auto completion strings (refinement options) for ‘SO’, the terms and phrases (refinement options) are displayed and the user selects one and the refinement option replaces the ‘SO’ (query defining character) it is **added** to the search field and at Figure 2B the display shows the incrementally updated auto completion strings (refinement options) for ‘SONY’”. Emphasis added.

Ortega also discloses:

For example, if Pokemon products are currently the best selling items within the database 22, the term POKEMON may be suggested whenever a user enters the letters “PO”, even though many hundreds of other items in the database may have **names that start with “PO”**.

...

FIGS. 2(a) and 2(b) illustrate the general form of a user interface that may be used by the **autocomplete** client 50 for both PCs and handheld computing devices. In this example, as the user enters a search query into a search field 60 of the Amazon.com web site (by voice, stylus, etc.), the **autocomplete** client displays suggested **autocomplete** terms and phrases in a drop-down box 62.

Ortega, column 4, lines 19–23 and column 5, lines 23–29. Emphasis added. On page 27 of the Office Action, in the “Response to Arguments” section, the Office Action further cites:

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the related terms list for the keyword COSMOS might start with the terms SAGAN and SPACE, ... once the user has entered a term that appears as a keyword within the table, the **autocomplete** client 50 could simply suggest **adding** the most highly ranked terms in the corresponding related terms list.

Ortega Column 6 lines 52–67. Emphasis added.

For substantially the same reasons as cited above in the response to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Ortega fails to disclose *at least* a method of query refinement comprising providing a user with one or more **query replacement options** as the user enters query defining characters, wherein the one or more query replacement options includes a broadening suggestion, wherein the one or more query replacement options **does not begin with the query defining characters** as recited in Independent Claim 13.

On page 7, the Office Action asserts that Gross teaches “the query defining word includes a string of characters followed by a predefined time delay before additional characters are entered by the user to provide **immediate** feedback ... as described by Gross (paragraph 181, lines 5–9).” Emphasis added.

Based on the above, it seems the Office Action is equating the predetermined time delay recited in Claim 13 with the immediate feedback disclosed in Gross. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

For a **predetermined time delay** to exist, there must be a **delay in time**, and that delay must be predetermined in some manner. In contrast, Gross discloses, “the search results are provided or narrowed substantially **immediately** after each character in a search string is entered by a user. Thus,

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the user is provided with **substantially immediate** feedback as the search string is being entered” Gross, Paragraph [0010], emphasis added

Applicant respectfully submits that “**substantially immediate**” **does not constitute a predetermined time delay**. Applicant further submits that, even assuming *arguendo* that “substantially immediate” could be interpreted to mean a time delay, Gross neither teaches nor suggests any **predetermined** time delay.

Because the deficiencies from Gross discussed above are not cured by the addition of any of the cited references , the references fail to teach or suggest each of the elements of Independent Claim 13. Accordingly, Claim 13 is allowable over the cited references and the rejection of Claim 13 should be withdrawn.

Claims 14–17, 20, and 34 depend from Claim 13, and are allowable at least by virtue of this dependency. Accordingly, the rejection of these claims should also be withdrawn.

4. Rejection of Independent Claims 21 under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claim 21 stands rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in further view of Liu in further view of Galitsky in further view of U.S. Patent Application 2006/0112178 to Van Vleet (hereinafter “**Van Vleet**”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Van Vleet discloses a system that stores an event history reflective of events that occur during browsing sessions of web site users, and various application features that may be implemented using the stored event data. Van Vleet, Abstract.

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Independent Claim 21 recites, (1) “providing a user with replacement alternatives as the user enters query defining characters”, (2) “detecting entry of a completed query defining word by the user”, (3) “providing the user with a query result list each time a query defining word is detected without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission”, (4) “providing the user with query **replacement** options related to the query defining word without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission, wherein the query replacement options include a broadening suggestion, wherein at least one of the query replacement options **does not begin with the query defining word**”, (5) “determining whether the user selects a provided query replacement option”, (6) “providing the user with an updated query result list when it is determined that the user has selected a provided query replacement option”, and (7) “providing a visual indicator to the user each time the updated query result list is provided to the user”. Emphasis added.

In rejecting the claim, the Office Action asserts that Ortega teaches “providing a user with auto-complete alternatives as the user enters query defining characters (Figure 2A, Reference No. 62, auto completion strings (refinement options), Figure 2A–2B and column 5, lines 23–36, Figure 2A displays the auto completion strings (refinement options) for ‘SO’ and at Figure 2B the display shows the incrementally updated auto completion string (refinement options) for ‘SONY’”).

In addition, Ortega discloses:

For example, if Pokemon products are currently the best selling items within the database 22, the term POKEMON may be

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suggested whenever a user enters the letters “PO”, even though many hundreds of other items in the database may have **names that start with “PO”**.

...

FIGS. 2(a) and 2(b) illustrate the general form of a user interface that may be used by the **autocompletion** client 50 for both PCs and handheld computing devices. In this example, as the user enters a search query into a search field 60 of the Amazon.com web site (by voice, stylus, etc.), the **autocompletion** client displays suggested **autocompletion** terms and phrases in a drop-down box 62.

Ortega, column 4, lines 19–23 and column 5, lines 23–29. Emphasis added. On page 27 of the Office Action, in the “Response to Arguments” section, the Office Action further cites:

the related terms list for the keyword COSMOS might start with the terms SAGAN and SPACE, ... once the user has entered a term that appears as a keyword within the table, the **autocompletion** client 50 could simply suggest **adding** the most highly ranked terms in the corresponding related terms list.

Ortega Column 6 lines 52–67. Emphasis added.

For substantially the same reasons as cited above in the response to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Ortega fails to disclose *at least* a method of incrementally refining queries comprising providing a user with **broadening query replacement suggestions that do not begin with the query defining word** as recited in Independent Claim 21.

Because the deficiency in Ortega described above is not cured by any of the cited references (standing alone or in combination), the references fail to teach or suggest each of the elements of Independent Claim 21. Accordingly,

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Claim 21 is allowable over the cited references and the rejection of Claim 21 should be withdrawn.

Claims 23–24, and 35 depend from Claim 21, and are allowable at least by virtue of this dependency. Accordingly, the rejection of these claims should also be withdrawn.

5. Rejection of Independent Claims 25 under 35 USC § 103(a)

On pages 14–17 of the Office Action, Claim 25 is rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in further view of Liu in further view of Galitsky in further view of Van Vleet. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 25 recites, (1) “a query entry text box for entering query defining characters”, (2) “a query refinement option list including at least one user selectable query **replacement** option that is incrementally updated as a query is entered into the query entry text box without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission, wherein the user selectable query replacement option includes **a broadening suggestion**, wherein the query replacement option **begins with characters other than the query defining characters**”, (3) “a query result list that is incrementally updated as a query is entered into the query entry text box without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission”, and (4) “a visual indicator that indicates when the query result list is updated”. Emphasis added.

In rejecting the claim, the Office Action asserts that Ortega teaches “a query refinement option list of user selectable query refinement options (Figure

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2A, Reference No. 62, **autocompletion strings** (refinement options)) that is incrementally updated as a query is entered into the query entry text box ... (Figure 2A–2B and column 5, lines 23–36, Figure 2A displays the **auto completion strings** (refinement options for ‘SO’ and at Figure 2B the display shows the incrementally updated auto completion strings refinement options) for ‘SONY’”. Emphasis added.

Ortega also discloses:

For example, if Pokemon products are currently the best selling items within the database 22, the term POKEMON may be suggested whenever a user enters the letters “PO”, even though many hundreds of other items in the database may have **names that start with “PO”**.

...

FIGS. 2(a) and 2(b) illustrate the general form of a user interface that may be used by the **autocompletion** client 50 for both PCs and handheld computing devices. In this example, as the user enters a search query into a search field 60 of the Amazon.com web site (by voice, stylus, etc.), the **autocompletion** client displays suggested autocompletion terms and phrases in a drop-down box 62.

Ortega, column 4, lines 19–23 and column 5, lines 23–29. Emphasis added. On page 27 of the Office Action, in the “Response to Arguments” section, the Office Action further cites:

the related terms list for the keyword COSMOS might start with the terms SAGAN and SPACE, ... once the user has entered a term that appears as a keyword within the table, the **autocompletion** client 50 could simply suggest **adding** the most highly ranked terms in the corresponding related terms list.

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Ortega Column 6 lines 52–67. Emphasis added.

For substantially the same reasons as cited above in the response to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Ortega fails to disclose *at least* a query refinement option list including at least one user selectable **broadening query replacement suggestion that begins with characters other than the query defining characters** as recited in Independent Claim 25.

Because this deficiency in Ortega is not cured by any of the cited references (alone or in any reasonable combination), the references fail to teach or suggest each of the elements of Independent Claim 25. Accordingly, Claim 25 is allowable over the cited references and the rejection of Claim 25 should be withdrawn.

Claims 27–29, and 36 depend from Claim 25, and are allowable at least by virtue of this dependency. Accordingly, the rejection of these claims should also be withdrawn.

6. Rejection of Independent Claims 30 under 35 USC § 103(a)

On pages 21–25 of the Office Action, Claim 30 is rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in further view of Liu in further view of Galitsky in further view of US 2003/0182463 to Valk (hereinafter “Valk”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Valk discloses a method of providing a software application over the internet to a client via a web browser. Valk, Abstract. Valk further discloses limiting the amount of data provided to the client based on the connection

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speed or bandwidth available between the user's system and the remote system server. Valk, paragraph 0059.

Independent Claim 30 recites, (1) "a user input device enabling input of query defining text characters", (2) "a display", (3) "a data content that is searchable", (4) "a network connection for accessing at least a portion of the data content", (5) "a memory in which machine instructions are stored", and (6) "a processor that is coupled to the user input device, to the display, to the data content, to the network connection, and to the memory, the processor executing the machine instructions to carry out a plurality of functions", the functions including (7) "defining one or more query related character patterns that do not include an explicit indicator of query submission", (8) "monitoring entry of query defining characters by a user to detect entry of a defined query related character pattern", (9) "searching the data content and providing the user with an updated query result when a defined query related character pattern is detected without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission", (10) "providing the user with **query replacement options** related to the detected defined query related character pattern without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of query submission, wherein the query replacement options include a broadening suggestion, and wherein **the broadening suggestion begins with a character pattern that is different from the query related character pattern**", and (11) "changing the defined query related character patterns in response to a change in a connection speed at the network connection, the query related character patterns defined to occur more frequently as the connection speed increases". Emphasis added.

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In rejecting the claim, the Office Action asserts that Ortega teaches “providing the user with query refinement options each related to the detected defined query character pattern without requiring the user to provide the explicit indicator of the query submission (Figure 2A, Reference No. 62, auto completion strings (refinement options), Figure 2A–2B and column 5, lines 23–36, Figure 2A displays the auto completion strings (refinement options) for ‘SO’ and at Figure 2B the display shows the incrementally updated auto completion strings (refinement options) for ‘SONY’”.

Ortega also discloses:

For example, if Pokemon products are currently the best selling items within the database 22, the term POKEMON may be suggested whenever a user enters the letters “PO”, even though many hundreds of other items in the database may have **names that start with “PO”**.

...

FIGS. 2(a) and 2(b) illustrate the general form of a user interface that may be used by the **autocompletion** client 50 for both PCs and handheld computing devices. In this example, as the user enters a search query into a search field 60 of the Amazon.com web site (by voice, stylus, etc.), the **autocompletion** client displays suggested **autocompletion** terms and phrases in a drop-down box 62.

Ortega, column 4, lines 19–23 column 5, lines 23–29. Emphasis added.

On page 27 of the Office Action, in the “Response to Arguments” section, the Office Action further cites:

the related terms list for the keyword COSMOS might start with the terms SAGAN and SPACE, ... once the user has entered a term that appears as a keyword within the table, the

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autocompletion client 50 could simply suggest **adding** the most highly ranked terms in the corresponding related terms list.

Ortega Column 6 lines 52–67. Emphasis added.

For substantially the same reasons as cited above in the response to Claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that Ortega fails to disclose *at least* providing the user with **query replacement options including a broadening suggestion that does begins with a character pattern that is different than the query related character pattern** as recited in Independent Claim 30.

Because this deficiency in Ortega is not cured by any of the cited references (alone or in any reasonable combination), the references fail to teach or suggest each of the elements of independent Claim 30. Accordingly, Claim 30 is allowable over the cited references and the rejection of Claim 30 should be withdrawn.

Claims 31–32 and 37 depend from Claim 30, and are allowable at least by virtue of this dependency. Accordingly, the rejection of these claims should also be withdrawn.

7. Rejection of Dependent Claim 28 under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claim 28 is rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ortega in view of Gross in further view of Liu in further view of Galitsky in further view of Van Vleet. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 28 recites all the features of claim 25, and further recites, “wherein the query replacement option list is semi-transparent”.

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The Office Action rejected Claim 28 asserting “same as claim arguments above and Ortega teaches: wherein the query refinement option list is semi-transparent (Figure 2A, Ref. No. 62).”

However, neither Ortega Figure 2A nor the related text in Ortega’s specification at column 5, lines 27–36 teach or suggest semi-transparent features. Therefore, Applicant respectfully traverses this objection for at least the additional reason of not reciting each limitation of Claim 28.

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8. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, in view of the above amendment and remarks it is submitted that the claims are patentably distinct over the prior art and that all the rejections to the claims have been overcome. Reconsideration and reexamination of the above Application is requested. Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully requests that the pending claims be allowed, and that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If the Examiner believes, after this amendment, that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

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If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicants hereby request any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee that is not covered by an enclosed check please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0463.

Respectfully submitted,
Microsoft Corporation

Date: January 26, 2009

By: /Henry Gabryjelski/

Henry Gabryjelski, Reg. No.: 62,828
Direct telephone 425-703-8116
Microsoft Corporation
One Microsoft Way
Redmond WA 98052-6399

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January 26, 2009
Date

/Noemi Tovar/
Noemi Tovar

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